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Pumping dependent on test results

GRIFFITH — Water will not be pumped from a clay pit at the town landfill here until results of water and soil tests are reviewed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, an EPA official said Monday.

The heavy rain of last Thursday probably did not dilute the ground water and soil samples obtained by EPA technicians, said Robert Swale, project manager for the EPA Superfund clean-up site at American Chemical Services Inc., adjacent to the landfill.

"I feel the samples are valid," Swale said. "If anything is there, we'll find out."

Concern about seepage of contaminants from the Superfund site at 420 S. Colfax St. into the active portion of the town landfill where the clay pit is periodically drained brought the EPA's Tactical Assistance Team to the site Thursday. The clay is used to cover the landfill and is found about 12 to 14 feet beneath a top layer of sand, said Swale.

Water from the clay pit is pumped into a drainage ditch that may empty into Turkey Creek. Swale said the EPA wants to determine if the water has been polluted by the movement of contaminated ground water

from the ACS dump. The sand cover may also have been contaminated, he said.

Swale said some of the sand has been sold and removed, but added the EPA will wait for the test results before investigating further.

EPA technicians also took samples of leachate — water that drains from the garbage and debris in the landfill — that is sent by Griffith to the Hammond Sanitary District for treatment. Swale said pumping of the leachate to Hammond, which was suspended pending the EPA tests, has been resumed.